

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2888

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E.O. 11652: N.A.

TAGS: ELAB, ECON, CA

SUBJECT: CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN B.C. SHUTS DOWN AS EMPLOYERS
IMPOSE LOCK-OUT

1. EIGHT HUNDRED-EMPLOYER MEMBERS OF THE B.C. CONSTRUCTION LABOUR RELATIONS ASSOCIATION (CLRA) LOCKED OUT 40,000 EMPLOYEES IN THE PROVINCE LATE JUNE 30 AS NEGOTIATIONS FOR NEW TWO-YEAR CONTRACT BROKE DOWN. ALTHOUGH WAGES ARE AN ISSUE INVOLVED, IT APPEARS MAJOR PROBLEM IS INTERNAL DISSENSION AMONG BUILDING TRADES UNIONS REGARDING FORMATION OF JOINT BARGAINING COMMITTEE TO NEGOTIATE FOR ALL UNIONS WITH THE CLRA. CURRENTLY, CLRA BARGAINS SEPARATELY WITH THE MYRIAD OF DIFFERENT TRADE UNIONS IN THE INDUSTRY.

2. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS REPORT, JOINING BARGAINING BEING PUSHED BY B.C.-YUKON CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL EXECUTIVE AND ITS LARGEST MEMBER, CARPENTERS UNION. HOWEVER, MAJORITY OF UNIONS TN COUNCIL REJECTED PROPOSAL BY SLIM 8-7 MARGIN.

3. COMMENT: PREVIOUS CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY STRIKE TWO YEARS AGO LASTED SEVERAL MONTHS AND CRIPPLED B.C. ECONOMY. LATEST STRIKE STOPS PRESS-ESTIMATED DOLS 2 BILLION WORTH OF ON-GOING CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN THE PROVINCE. BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE AND DISCUSSION WITH LOCAL LONG-TIME OBSERVER OF PROVINCE ECONOMIC SITUATION, CONGEN WOULD BE SURPRISED

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IF STRIKE LASTS LESS THAN MINIMUM TWO-THREE WEEKS. LONGER

STRIKE VERY POSSIBLE, ALTHOUGH PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT,
WHICH HAS BEEN VERY ACTIVE IN INTERVENING IN RECENT MAJOR
STRIKES, MAY WELL INTERVENE IN THIS ONE AS WELL. B.C.
GOVERNMENT HAS JUST GIVEN ITSELF POWER TO DEFINE "ESSENTIAL
SERVICE INDUSTRIES" FOR PURPOSES OF ISSUING BACK-TO-WORK
ORDERS, BUT AS YET HAS MADE NO MOVE IN THIS STRIKE. END
COMMENT.
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